

The

# Alcester Grammar



M.D.C.

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# School Record

March, 1945.

# Alcester Grammar School Record.

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No. 80.

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EDITOR—MR. VJ V. DRULLER.

## COMMITTEE—

JOYCE PLESTERS, JOAN HORSEMAN, SHEILA STALLARD,  
KATHLEEN HOLMES, EADIE i, GRAY ii, PRESTIDGE.

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## Editorial.

This term, as we notified all postal subscribers in December, we are not supplying any magazines by post unless payment has been made in advance. We are afraid that several Old Scholars will not receive their "RECORD" this month, as they have neglected to renew their subscriptions. A few copies, however, will be set aside, in case any late subscriptions reach us. Those postal subscribers whose subscriptions expire this month will find a notice to that effect enclosed with their magazine.

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The Alcester Builders have been busy on the premises all the term. Work on the canteen has progressed steadily, and one is now able to form a better idea of what the buildings will be like when completed. The dining room now has its roof and its windows are glazed, while numerous structural alterations have taken place in what is to be the new kitchen. In addition, a start has been made on the extension of the Mistresses' Study—an extension long overdue, considering how crowded their room has been during the past three years.

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Games have suffered badly. Soon after term opened, a period of snowy weather prevented the fields being used, and after the cold spell passed games could not be played owing to the mud. Fixture after fixture had to be cancelled, and it was not till after half term that the football eleven were able to play their first match.

Attendance has also suffered. For several days during the cold period in January only between a half and three quarters of the pupils put in an appearance. Then the thaw and the milder weather produced a crop of colds and coughs ; and more recently, measles and whooping cough, which have been prevalent in the neighbourhood, have depleted most of the Forms in varying degrees.

Nor has the Staff been immune from illness. For the past three weeks we have been working under conditions of considerable difficulty, as three members—Mr. Thornton, Dr. Falk and Miss Flynn—are away ill.

The beginning of next term will witness the turning of a new page in the history of A.G.S. From that date all fees in the main school will be abolished. There will naturally be a number of other changes to meet the provisions of the Education Act. We shall be able to indicate the most important of these in next term's magazine.

In the December number we printed an article from a former pupil on the subject of Pharmacy. Since then we have received the suggestion that a series of such articles, written by Old Scholars, who have completed their training for certain vocations and can advise others who are contemplating taking up the same sort of work, would be most useful. We hope to print one such article in the next issue and should welcome others. Now, Old Scholars, what about it? Can you who are now qualified in profession or trade, help those following you to avoid any of the mistakes, etc., into which you fell?

## **The School Register.**

### **Valete.**

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| *Hopcroft, M. M. (VI), 1939-44.        | Lane, T. J. (Trans.), 1942-44.        |
| Baldwin, M. (Upp. Va), 1942-44.        | Saunders, C. J. (Trans.), 1941-44.    |
| *Irving, J. C. (Upp. Va), 1939-44.     | Castle, B. D. (Upp. IVb), 1942-44.    |
| *Vale, J. E. (Upp. Va), 1939-44.       | Roberts, G. M. (Low. IVa), 1941-44.   |
| Horseman, Jean M. (Upper Vb), 1940-44. | Rudland, R. (Low. IVb), 1944.         |
| *Jones, D. M. (Upp. Vb), 1939-44.      | Francis, A. (IIIa), 1942-44.          |
| *Peel, A. (Upper. Vb), 1937-44.        | Hill, D. G. (IIIa), 1943-44.          |
| Sumner, M. E. (Upp. Vb), 1941-44.      | Meyrick, S. J. (IIIa), 1944.          |
| Wells, J. K. (Upp. Vb), 1938-44.       | Nicholls, F. G. (Upp. Rem.), 1942-44. |
| Price, J. G. (Low. Va), 1941-44.       | Harris, J. B. (Low. Rem.), 1941-44.   |
| Roberts, J. M. (Low. Va), 1941-44.     |                                       |

\* Prefect.

There have been 342 pupils in attendance this term.

### **Old Scholars' News.**

Greetings at the end of another term to all Old Scholars. The Staff take this opportunity of thanking all those who have written to them since December, and the editor is grateful to several who have sent along items of news concerning themselves or others.

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Congratulations to J. S. C. Wright on his appointment to the office of Low Bailiff of Alcester for the year 1945. He is the first Old Scholar of the present A.G.S. to become a governor of the school.

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Molly Bryan, who joined N.A.A.F.I. over three years ago, is at present Manageress at a branch in Surrey.

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W. H. Hunt, having completed his flying course in South Africa, is now commissioned and serving in Italy.

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C. H. Bryan is now a qualified torpedo man and is on "H.M.S. Birmingham."

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J. H. Sutor is serving in the Fleet Air Arm.

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A. W. Brand had now for some time been in Ceylon.

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We hear news of P. G. Chatterley being seen not so very long ago at a Greek port.

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F. Duxbury is, we understand, now in India.

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J. M. H. Richards is a steward on the "Queen Mary."

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G. Wilkes was recently home on leave and expecting soon to proceed to the Far East.

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D. Spencer has arrived in Australia.

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G. E. Howes has been posted to the Northamptonshire Regiment, and A. L. Lucas is in the Suffolks.

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Nancy Dales has joined the A.T.S.

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Pat Carman is now working at the India Office.

Marian Sisam has recently joined N.A.A.F.I.

D. Ore has joined the Navy under the "Y" Scheme.

To the list of Old Scholars at the University should be added the name of Joan Godwin, who is at Birmingham.

Elizabeth Champion has been married in Aden, but no particulars of the marriage have so far reached us.

F. Horton is now L.A.C. and is in Belgium with the Tactical Air Force.

J. Orrell is a gunner in the R.A.

Congratulations to L. Earp, who has been mentioned in despatches.

Gilian Fifield has been accepted a member of the Royal Academy of Dancing, as the result of passing the Elementary Major Examination of the Academy.

We are sorry to hear that Doreen Smith (née Horton) is still ill. She has not yet recovered from the operation which she underwent three years ago.

### **Births.**

On October 25th to Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Keniston—a son.

On November 25th to Lieutenant and Mrs. A. F. Mason—a daughter.

On November 28th to Mr. and Mrs. S. Ison—a daughter.

On December 5th to Wing-Commander and Mrs. J. D. Sumner (née Betty Clark)—a son.

On January 4th to Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Foster (née Freda Sore)—a son.

On January 19th to Mr. and Mrs. G. P. Baylis—a son.

On February 2nd to Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Snell (née Joyce Finnemore)—a son.

On February 20th to Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Bond (née Lydia Earp)—a son.

### **Marriages.**

On January 13th at Ealing Green, Flight-Lieutenant Gordon Ernest David Duff to Mary Eileen Clemson (scholar 1931—36).

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On March 5th, at Alvechurch, W. Henry Bremner to Nora Margaret Blackford (scholar 1930—36).

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### **Two Schoolboys Celebrate—1815.**

The rays of the sun gleaming through the thick greenish glass of my casement roused me to the knowledge of another glorious June day to be wasted at my oaken desk. Suddenly a shrill whistle came to my ears from the street below ; I knew it at once : it was my friend Peter Earwhit, son of Alcester's High Bailiff. I leapt out of my bed and leaned from my open window.

"What's to do, Peter ?" I called softly. "We've beaten the Froggies, we've beaten the Froggies, we won't go to school to-day !" was his breathless reply. "How do you know ?" "Late last night a rider came to our house with messages for father. He said that London was all agog with the news yesterday. We fought them at Water-something and the Duke made 'em run." "I'll be with with you in a trice," said I, and it was a matter of seconds before I was dressed. With my steel-buckled shoes in one hand, I crept down the stairs to the larder. I took a long draught of strong ale, then, with a piece of venison pasty in my hand, I softly unbarred the door and joined my friend.

"Let's go to the mill and hunt rabbits in the old Abbey grounds," said Peter. So we passed by the malt house at the corner, where the sleepy apprentices were stumbling about the yard. As we went by the Town Hall we saw, as usual, a couple of benighted toppers snoring under the open arches. Down School Lane we clattered, to the corner of the Priory, where the rooks were cawing round their nests in the lofty elms. Cutting off across the fields, we soon arrived at the Abbey grounds and had rare sport with the conies.

After a couple of hours we lay down on the bank and finished the remains of our pasties, meditating on our next move. "Shall we go and plague old Robbins in the rope-walk ?" said I ; and away we went. When we reached the road, however, we heard the lamentable bray of a donkey in the pound.

"I'll wager that's Gaffer Williams' donkey again," said Peter, and, filling our pockets with pebbles, we scrambled up on the wall. It was a lively ass and cantered well with a little encouragement. "Be off, you young varmint! Get thee gone to thy learning," came the shrill voice of Mistress Shore, mine hostess of the 'Beer by the Pound,' so without further ado we leaped off the wall and meandered down the Priory. "Look," I exclaimed, as we passed the old river bed, "Let's get some of that clay to pelt the boys in the ropewalk." We soon stuffed our pockets and, retracing our steps up the Bull's Head yard, we saw the boys toiling away at their wheels. An unlucky shot hit big Billy Button on the ear, so we decided to find healthier amusement elsewhere.

Down the road we saw a cloud of dust, and heard the pitter-patter of sheep being driven to market. "Gad, Ned, it's market day. Let's go and see what's to do." We helped to drive the sheep down to High Street and there found a crowd, all offering their advice to the beadle, who was busy erecting a wheel and spit opposite the Royal Oak. We soon learnt that an ox had been graciously presented by the Marquis in honour of the occasion. We stood watching until the embers glowed redly under the blackening carcass, and then, the savoury smell floating behind us, we remembered that we had not eaten for two hours.

We resumed our way up High Street, and were watching the efforts of two men in fustian trying to pen a sow and litter when a heavy hand seized my shoulder. Peter's attempt at rescue failed, and my heart dropped to my feet as I realised that our captor was Billy Button. Peter, however, struggled so hard that I managed to free myself, but unfortunately I slipped on the cobbles and rolled into the miry gutter in the middle of the street, where Peter perforce joined me. We rose painfully from the stinking slime and ruefully agreed that a wash was for once essential. We took the nearest course to Peter's home, and passed through the scolding women who trembled for their white cloths and yellow pats of butter. We arrived at the Angel and got Bob Cratchit the hostler to sluice us with water from the pump in the yard.

While we were drying we heard the horn of the London coach and rushed out to see the horses changed. Peter's mother then told us to have something to eat, for once not realising that we were playing truant. As we lingered over our meal we pondered on our next move, and eventually decided that after an afternoon spent around the market,

watching the preparations for an evening of revelry, we should carry out a plan that we had often talked over and yet never had the nerve to do. This was to see a ghost, a truly dreadful undertaking. Rumour had it that on a dark night the ghost of an old woman was to be seen up Crosslanes, and it was said that she had died of the King's evil, and consequently she had been buried in the ditch. This place was held in awe by everyone and few were the men who had passed the spot without seeing a dreadful old hag, shrivelled and dried up, with luminous eyes and a glowing wand in her hand.

We had just resolved to do this when we saw our school-mate John Biggins bringing a bulky package for the boot of the coach.

"Are you playing truant, too?" we cried, "I'll lay we get a good switchin' from schoolmaster tomorrow!"

"Huh!" said John, "I suppose you two have been dodging round all the back alleys. You might as well have spared your pains for the school was given a whole holiday, because of the Iron Duke, God bless him!"

D. H. EADIE (VI).

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### **Carol Singing.**

Last Christmas the Church choir decided to go carol-singing, to obtain funds to provide the ladies with a uniform which, it was and still is hoped, would add dignity to their office. Being a member I went with the party to make my effort towards buying the gowns.

We went out for the first time on December 18th, twenty-two of us (ladies and gentlemen), equipped with torches, so that we could see to read. We could not afford enough time to stop outside every house as we took an organ with us, which had to be unloaded off a truck at each stop. We were afterwards told that we could be heard from one end of the village to the other; so of course it was quite unnecessary for us to sing at each door.

Another member and myself were supposed to sing the descant to "The First Nowell," but after our first attempt, we were asked (very politely) "what that awful din was." So in order that our listeners might not be scared, we sang the tune every time after that. I must admit, it was a din, as my partner seemed to have learned a different tune from mine—I know mine was the correct tune, as I had learnt it at school—and I am afraid there were many discords.



Our last call that evening was at a farmhouse, where the farmer was celebrating his birthday. We were not asked into the party, but the gentleman came out with a huge basket of apples.

Nothing very exciting happened on the following night, the reason perhaps being that it was so foggy. The only thing I can remember is being asked into a house to partake of coffee and mince-pies. Who would expect me to forget that?

Next evening was more exciting, as we were invited into two houses. At the first we had mince-pies and coffee and many compliments on our singing. At the second, we had hot soup—so hot, that when the Vicar said, "Two more seconds only" I burnt my tongue in trying to finish it.

On the return journey we took a different road, so that we could visit a few outlying houses and the W.L.A. Hostel, without making a special journey. In doing this we had to go along a haunted lane, and this is where the fun begins. As our Vicar had not lived in our village very long, the ladies had been telling him about our ghost, "Jenny Wren." Not long after I noticed that he and the organist, who I am sure will not mind my telling you that he has white hair, were hurrying on in front. Being somewhat nervous (it was ten-thirty p. m.) I hurried too. I then heard them making plans to frighten the ladies. At the corner which the ghost inhabits, the organist jumped into the ditch and put a white handkerchief over his face. We waited, and it worked! When the ladies were near enough he started moaning and rising out of the ditch. The ladies screamed and started to run, but on hearing us laugh, realised that they had been fooled. They were very embarrassed then and said they knew all the time that it was a trick.

On our next mission we did not stop so often but were hurried along by the Vicar, as if there was no time to lose. Then we went through a very muddy field (organ as well) to a farmhouse, where we discovered the reason for hurrying. There was a table spread with food, enough for forty. Including the family there was only twenty-six of us, but we ate it all. Then our hostess asked our organist to entertain us by conjuring, and it was ten-forty five when we set out for home. Our old-fashioned candle lamp used by the organist refused to function and our torches were very dull. We arrived home at eleven-fifteen after a very exciting journey, during which we were chased by some drunkards and shouted at for "making a noise," by a gentleman, whose words I will not repeat!

Altogether we collected twenty-three pounds and we have our gowns ready to wear at Easter. I shall have many happy memories each time I wear mine.

W. GANDERTON (Upper VA).

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### **Fireworks.**

Fireworks have always fascinated me, and now, when they are unobtainable, I often wish I could procure some for bonfire night. I have frequently considered making some myself, but I feared I might blow myself up instead ! While I was staying with my uncle at Christmas, however, I was asked what fireworks were composed of. Upon my admitting that I did not know, everyone laughed. "Upon my word ! call yourself a chemist !" one of my uncle's friends remarked. That was enough ; I started experimenting with fireworks right away.

At first I had no success, but rather than be beaten, I tried again. After much thought and a great deal of effort, I produced a firework which burnt like a candle ! Knowing that iron filings produced "sparkler" effect when thrown into a flame, I tried adding them to my mixture. Selecting the better ones, I tried adding magnesium filings as well. Soon I produced a firework which burnt with a brilliant white light, throwing out sparks and balls of fire all around !

I went into my laboratory thoroughly pleased with myself, and mixed up about a bucketful of the mixture. As I began putting it into cases, my father, who had taken a great interest in my work, came in. I explained what I had done, and let one of my samples off to show him. He lit a cigarette, telling me to be very careful with the fireworks. By accident, he threw his match right into the mixture, and, as it was highly inflammable, it was ignited and all went up in flames. Our clothes were burnt, and water poured on the fire only made the situation worse. To crown all the mishaps, a slip of paper on which the constituents were written down was burnt.

No matter how I have tried, I cannot remember what the mixture contained, nor have I been able to make another one anything like it. But I am determined to discover one some day.

J. PRESTIDGE (Lower VB).

### Moonlight Patrol.

Ten armed men in battledress were receiving orders from their Platoon Commander in Platoon H.Q. He told them that the object of the patrol they were about to embark on was to locate an enemy post, ascertain their strength and bring back prisoners, if possible. The men put on light shoes, blacked their faces and resumed section formation. When every man was sure of his job, the patrol moved off—a line of silent shadows in the moonlight.

As they moved, they spaced themselves at five yard intervals, keeping well into the shadows of the hedges and trees. Every man kept observation in a direction they had been given, so that there was the best possible observation on all sides. In this fashion they moved forward for the first five hundred yards of meadowland, negotiating obstacles with great skill. Then they were quietly halted in a hollow and the section leader ordered the Bren group to take up a fire position on the right in order to cover the advance of the rest of the section. They were told to rejoin him in six minutes time. The rest of the section then went forward and reached a good position of observation.

While they were waiting for the Bren group to join them, a cough was heard in the stillness. Every man froze and as they stared at the place a German sentry materialized and another was heard to speak to him from behind.

After the Bren group had arrived the section leader detailed two men to capture the men forward. They accomplished their task and the rest of the section occupied the position. The section leader then crawled forward with three men in order to obtain more information about the enemy position.

As they neared the position the silence was broken by a familiar voice saying "Come on, get up, it's eight o'clock. You shouldn't stay up reading those army books." And so I was suddenly converted from a silent, unseen observer of a battle front at night to a boy in bed with another routine day in front of him.

WOOD i (Upper VB).

### A Limerick.

The dinners at Alcester Gram.,  
Are devoid of roast beef and roast lamb.  
A hash of coarse meat  
Is served as a treat.  
Thank heaven for Friday and Spam!

JENNIFER BIRCH (IIIa).

### **Spring.**

The icy reign of Winter was over at last, and in a flurry of snow-flakes, the old man had departed, leaving the wood cold and bare. But not for long, for through the trees, came a young girl, dressed in a filmy frock of palest green. Her eyes were blue as the sky on a summer's morn, her hair shone like the sun, and her skin was as white as the early snowdrop.

As she walked, the grass sprang up round her feet. In her hand she carried a wand, and as she passed along, she lightly touched each tree and bush, which immediately burst into tiny leaf. The bulbs pushed up their tender shoots to greet her, and the gentle breeze following after her, set the catkins swinging on the Hazel twigs. The radiance of her hair shone on the silvery pussy-willows.

As she reached the centre of the wood, a tiny robin flew shyly down from a nearby tree and asked, "Who are you?" The girl replied, "I am Spring."

ANNE HEMMING (Lower IVB).

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### **Notes And News**

The Spring term, which opened on Wednesday, January 10th, closes on Wednesday, March 28th.

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New prefects this term are W. Ganderton, J. Higgs, S. Rymell, S. Woolley, Moizer, Gray ii, and Toye.

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On Wednesday, December 13th, Mr. and Mrs. Charques led a discussion with the Sixth form on "This Writing Game," and "The Power of the Press."

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A talk on Alcester and its history was given by Mr. Woodward Jephcott to the Sixth and Upper Fifth on Monday, December 18th.

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The Lower Fifths, Transition and Upper Fourths attended a recital given by Mr. Leslie Bennett (piano), and Mrs. Bennett (recorders) on Wednesday, December 20th.

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Carol concerts were arranged for all forms in the school during the week before Christmas.

At the end of the last term we said good-bye to Mrs. Sharkey, who has been our visiting Domestic Science mistress for six years. Up to the present no successor to her has been appointed, but Mrs. E. G. Hunt has been helping us out by taking needlework classes each Tuesday.

We welcome this term Miss M. Rastrick, who has joined the Staff as teacher of biology.

Mrs. Coomber has continued to attend for three days a week this term, while Mr. Booth has taken classes for the other two days, in addition to filling gaps caused through absence of other members of the Staff.

The landing outside the Upper Fifth room upstairs has been very much darkened through the fitting during the Christmas holidays of a large storage tank in the roof.

On Monday, February 5th, Mr. Herbert Willard gave two recitals of a programme called "Living Literature." This consisted of character studies in costume from Dickens and Shakespeare.

Half-term was Monday, February 19th.

Further recitals were given by Mr. Willard on Friday, March 2nd. On this occasion his programme was drawn largely from "Treasure Island."

The "Burns" biology prize of three guineas has this year been divided among three scholars, A. Farquhar, B. Perkins and Rogers.

Hockey colours were awarded at the end of last term to M. Irving, J. Irving, and N. Nash for the second time, and to J. Hill.

Football colours were awarded to Hancox and Stone i.

### **The Prime Minister.**

Mr. Churchill is a very good man,  
He tries to tell us all he can,  
Flying here and flying there,  
Trying to make peace everywhere,  
And when this wicked war is won,  
We all will think of what he has done.

JOSEPHINE HOLDER (IIIb).

### **Sixth Form Wanderings.**

Before entering the study as the future science sixth we knew little of the "joys" of wandering and searching for a place in which to work. Now, however, we are under no illusions. We have in fact undergone the experiences of many of our predecessors, and it is on their behalf and with sympathy for all future sixth-formers that we offer this article.

Our first noteworthy experience occurred one afternoon during a mathematics lesson. On entering the room, which we usually occupy at this time, we found it in use and after discovering that there were no vacant rooms we contemplated using the corridor. Fortunately this project was abandoned, and we were granted the unusual honour of working in our own form room. After the door had been locked the black-board was placed against it, and the long overdue lesson commenced. It was now discovered that there was no board-rubber—but at this moment the bell was wisely rung, and the lesson was over.

As every sixth-former knows, the most important periods are those termed "private study" periods by the more elite or merely as "free" periods by such as ourselves. For one of these we were once allowed to use the dining-room, and this was deemed a very good idea when we saw a number of cakes and other eatables. Unfortunately, however, we were soon joined by two of the kitchen staff, who then began washing-up with more than usual vigour—or was it our imagination? This was almost unbearable, but worse was to come. The sixth-form French class arrived, and, although we understood very little of their discourse, it was no less disturbing than the discordant notes emitted by the crockery. We soon decided that work was impossible and resorted to discussing football and the demerits of school certificate.

The occasion which we remember, perhaps, most vividly was when our study was put to a use for which it could never have been meant—namely for teaching the small members of Remove. After collecting the books for our free period, we began the inevitable search for a room. The only place unoccupied was the gymnasium, and here we put up a table and, after acquiring two benches from the corridor, we began to work in earnest—for contrary to the opinion of many people the science sixth does work. Our peaceful labours were soon interrupted by the entry of the modern-studies sixth; but in spite of their presence our work continued—and on hearing the bell we all agreed that the period had been well and advantageously spent.

We could cite other instances, such as learning the intricacies of Latin scansion in front of another form or being relegated to the cloakrooms and trying to do Calculus in various ungainly positions ; but we feel that, perhaps, we have said too much already—and we fully realise that the reader's endurance is limited.

## THE NOMADS.

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### A Dilemma.

Procrastination is the thief of time and the slayer of opportunity. When I first discovered that I had need of a pair of shoes suitable for running in the cross-country race, I thought hopefully, that there was time enough for buying some, and so I did not exert myself to obtain a pair. But when the notice giving the date on which the cross-country race was to be run, appeared on the notice-board, I discovered that I had not much time, and I immediately began to make frenzied efforts to obtain a pair of running shoes.

I asked many people if they knew where such things were to be bought, but no one could enlighten me. I asked many to lend me a pair, but when they heard what kind of a race it was, and the sort of treatment the shoes would receive, they eagerly hastened to assure me that they needed the shoes themselves.

As a last resort, I went to town, and enquired at all the shoe shops there. Even there I was disappointed. In all the shops I was regarded with a pitying eye, and told that running shoes were not to be obtained anywhere. I did not give up hope until I was told that such shoes could only be obtained through a school. Our school does indeed supply them, but only for indoor use.

I then resolved to accept the inevitable, and decided to train and run in ordinary shoes. This was what many others had had to do, and consequently I was not too perturbed about it, and accepted my fate stoically ; but even so, when at last a good Samaritan offered to lend me a pair of pumps I accepted them gladly.

I could not help admitting to myself that if I had had to run in ordinary shoes, I should have had no one to blame but myself, and although rescued from that dilemma, I inwardly determined that in future, I would not leave such things until the last minute.

### **Coelenterata Aurelia.**

About three years ago I was evacuated to a small sea-side resort in North Wales. Here, because I had been given a bathing-suit for a birthday present, I thought that it was about time that I learned to swim. In order to achieve this aim I secured the services of a friend named Joan, who was a moderately good swimmer. Imagine my disappointment when, instead of going down to the beach straight away to immerse myself in its cold green water, I had to stay at home and begin my swimming lessons supported by a chair, moving my arms and legs about in a frenzied manner (much to the detriment of the furniture), in order to acquire what my friend called "The rudiments of the art."

Eventually, to my great delight I was allowed to go down to the beach and enter the water. After a few minutes I was swimming along at the rate of (to use a nautical term) one knot an hour, with my friend's hand underneath my chin, and an occasional push on the sea bed by one leg. Just when everything was going smoothly, my eyes perceived a rounded mass of a jelly-like substance underneath my very nose. Since I was not yet conversant with the art of swimming and therefore could not turn round but could only swim in a straight line, I, in my dilemma disappeared beneath the surface of the sea. However, the water was only three feet deep, and I stood up quickly and raced, screaming for help, towards the shore, leaving Joan, doubled up with laughter, still in the water.

I afterwards learnt that this nauseating mass was a jelly fish, which, according to the "Encyclopaedia Britannica," bears the scientific name of coelenterata aurelia. It is really beyond the limits of my imagination how such a low creature could possess such an imposing name. But be that as it may, I must confess that from that memorable day I have not entered the sea but have confined my swimming lessons to the placid blue water of a swimming bath.

SHEILA SUMMERHILL (Upper VB).

### **In The Evening.**

In the evening after tea,  
When birds no longer sing in the tree,  
Comes a little elf from a fairy glen,  
Riding on the back of a wren.  
He also comes in the cold chilly nights,  
With many more elves, all carrying lights,  
They sit and sing the whole night long,  
A very pretty little song.

DOREEN AMOS (IIIa).



### **My Dream Cottage.**

When walking through a small village in the heart of the country, I saw it, and knew I could not pass by without taking a look around.

It was a little black and white thatched cottage with tall dark red hollyhocks and red roses growing by the door. The latticed windows had red curtains and the quaint little door was black with age.

Seeing no one in sight I peeped through the window and here was my dream come true. I saw a perfect inglenook chimney with a cheerful log fire blazing on the hearth ; there were leather seats each side of the chimney corner. A copper kettle hanging over the fire on an iron hook was singing away, several comfortable chairs were drawn up and a black cat sat on the rug gazing into the fire. The furniture was of dark oak and the flickering of the fire shone on the oak beams of the low ceiling. The mantel-shelf was covered with brightly-coloured ornaments of all shapes and sizes, some resembling shoes, others birds or animals, and vases with old-fashioned inscriptions. Above these an oval shaped mirror was hanging.

I was quite startled by the chime of a grandfather clock which was standing in one corner sombrely ticking away. In the corner opposite a wireless stood on a round table. At the far end of the room there was a dresser, laden with a set of pewter dishes and willow pattern crockery and on the very top were some fine examples of brass. Then my eyes glanced to the centre of the room, where on a polished table, there was a magnificent bowl of fresh rosebuds.

I was on the point of leaving when I heard the sound of the turning of the handle of a well. Following the narrow path round to the back, I noticed a little old lady, in white bonnet and apron, busy drawing water. Not wishing to startle her, I thought I would look around the garden until she had finished. The back of the house was quite as neat as the front, for surrounding a lawn were little rockeries with clumps of violets and primroses here and there.

When the little old lady saw I was interested, she invited me in for a cup of tea. While she was making it, I glanced around the room and noticed how spotlessly clean everything was, and how not one object was out of place. She told me she had lived there for many years, and before I went away, made me promise to visit her again.

EDNA JAMES (Upper VA).

### Betty's Present.

Betty was six years old the other day, and she had a lovely birthday party and a cake which had six candles on it. Betty's Mummy said that she could invite ten friends to her party. Everything went well until after tea; then it was time for Pass-the-Parcel. Round and round the Parcel went stopping in someone's hands seven or eight times. Eventually the present fell into Molly's hands. Now Molly was Betty's best friend and Betty really wanted the present. It was a pretty little doll dressed in a pink and blue frock, and a lace bonnet. Molly loved the doll, but Betty was jealous. When her Daddy came home at six o'clock he brought Betty a parcel. Betty opened it, and what do you think she found? A lovely big doll with eyes that opened and closed.

GERALDINE BARTLETT (IIIA).

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### A Sagacious Dog

A friend of mine had a spaniel puppy about six months old, which two ladies of his acquaintance undertook to care for. The dog had his food given to him in a cup, which was always kept in the corner of the room for that purpose, and was fed while the worthy ladies were having their breakfast and tea. One day they forgot the dog, being engaged in a conversation, but to their surprise they saw him standing by the table with the cup held in his mouth, evidently for the purpose of having something put into it.

BRENDA MITCHELL (Lower VB).

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### Sonnet.

I sing not of the tree of life, nor fill  
With Paradise or Eden lost my verse;  
I have no message taught by heavenly will,  
Of angels, fiends, or Satan's earth-felt curse.  
I know no tales of knights or ladies fair,  
Whose amours in my verse should haply dwell  
And I but youthful, in whose life is there  
No sadness or no bliss that I might tell,  
Do not presume to sing of love or hate,  
Of romance, age, for these are still to be;  
My song is everything for which I wait,  
A song of hope, and fear—expectancy,  
As seventeen summers make for me my spring,  
What is there else but youth for me to sing?

EILEEN ROSE (VI).

### **Travelling Companions.**

I think most people will agree that travelling on a long journey is exceedingly boring, particularly if one is travelling alone. I usually while away the time and amuse myself by studying the other occupants of the compartment and their habits. This quite often proves very amusing.

Let me tell you of my fellow-travellers on one railway journey I made recently. In one corner sat the harassed mother with her little boy of about two years old. The latter was just at the age when he could not sit still for more than a minute at a time. First he was standing on the seat, then crawling under it until his coat which had once been white was of a dirty grey colour. Having recaptured him from the floor, his mother attempted to pacify him by giving him a piece of chocolate. I never could understand why people give chocolate to small babies. When he had eaten it, he resembled a nigger, as he had smothered himself and his clothes with it. After a time, however, he dropped off to sleep, for which I was quite thankful.

No sooner had the little boy settled down than a small man with a big voice started to speak. He expressed in no uncertain words his views on the war and inferred that if he had had a hand in the planning, we should soon have seen the armies in Berlin. I had quickly formed my opinion of this man. Fortunately the station approached where the man made his exit, and I am sure that the other occupants joined me in a sigh of relief.

The final interruption in the journey came when a party of three schoolgirls, who had, up to now, been proudly displaying their slight knowledge of French, decided to produce their packets of lunch. One of the trio had evidently placed a precious tomato in her knitting-bag, apparently for safety. She discovered with dismay that her friend had been sitting on it. That was the end of the tomato and the knitting. From out of satchels the other two had produced packets of smashed pastry, which had previously been jam-tart, but was now, being the worse for wear, hardly recognisable. At this point I realised I had to get out and I was forced to leave the girls in the midst of their refreshments

SHEILA WOOLLEY (Upper VA.)

### **In The Mountains.**

One day I decided I would climb the mountain which was in front of our house. It was a high mountain and was divided into two by a large stream which ran swiftly down the mountain side. This was known as the "Cadvan stream" because the mountain was called "Mount Cadvan."

I took my lunch with me and some cold milk in a flask, and started to climb. After a while I got very tired and hungry and I sat down and started to eat my lunch. As I did so I heard the soft bleating of the sheep, but all of a sudden I heard a very deep and pitiful groan that made me jump to my feet at once. I stood still and listened. I heard it once, twice, three times and more, each time getting fainter and fainter.

I ran to where the sound came from and there was a sheep pinned between a rock by his feet, and his body was nearly covered by water from the stream. The best thing I could do was to push the boulder into the stream. This was difficult, because I had to hold the sheep's head out of the water; but gradually it began to move, and with much effort I pushed it into the stream. The poor sheep by this time was unconscious, his two feet were crushed and his other two badly bruised. I took him home and bathed his feet and put the two crushed ones in splints. After about a fortnight he was able to limp about on his legs.

OLIVE AINGE (Trans.).

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### **The Changing Year,**

The spring has come in all its glory,  
The country-side is bright and gay,  
And now begins the old, old story,  
Of little lambs that skip and play.

And as another day is dawning,  
The birds are wheeling in the air,  
And soon the fruit, it will be forming,  
The luscious apple, plum, and pear.

The Autumn now is drawing near,  
The evenings now are growing dim,  
The trees in colours bright appear,  
The harvest must be gathered in.

The winter set in cold and clear,  
The fields and woods were clothed in white,  
The shops foretold of Christmas cheer,  
Of carols sung on Christmas night.

RUTH FRENCH (Lower Vb).

### The Only Watcher

All is still and the snow glistens in the light of the moon. Not a sound disturbs the peaceful night, yet wait ! silently glide three figures, their boots crunching in the powdery snow. On and on up the hill the three figures cautiously creep. Then as the moonbeams stray over to a humble little cottage, they stop and look at one another with scared faces; then shouldering their sacks they creep round under the dark shadows, unlatch the door and enter the little house as silently as the little mice in the wainscoting. The moon still peeping through the clouds as if trying to warn the inhabitants of their fate, slowly disappears into the clouds and all is dark. Then slowly she peeps through again as three figures with heavy sacks disappear over the edge of the moor.

ELIZABETH COATES (IIIB).

### Olla Podrida.

According to J. H., if the climax of a book does not shake the reader with the agony of suspension, then the book is disappointing.

*Puer in urbe multo diutius mansit quam soror* means (says A.M.) 'in many cities one boy out of two sits in sorrow.'

We can always cut the old bull up and make pea soup of him.

Headline—"Music and Politics." A fifth former demands "Vote by ballad."

*Matrem obsecrabat* means 'her mother was darkened.'

A former member of the Upper Fifth said that he used to keep liquid air in vacuum cleaners.

A new line on Renaissance architecture, "Pillows were built of stone and Mabel."

## **Ringling In The New Year.**

It was at eleven forty five on December the thirty first, 1944, when our team of bell-ringers (of which I am a member) assembled in the belfry of St. Peter's Church, Inkberrow.

As the clock ticked round to 12 mid-night, we took up our posts at our bell-ropes, while a bat was making a nuisance of itself by flying much too low. Our ears were alert for mid-night to strike, but it failed to do so. After waiting till two minutes past twelve, we put the striker out of action, said "rabbits" and heaved on the bell-ropes. The sound of the bells must have travelled miles around on that still frosty night, and we chimed as we had never before.

When we stopped, an investigation was held as to why 12 mid-night did not strike. It was discovered that the man who wound up the clock had knocked a bell rope into the pulleys which pulled the weights up the tower. This rope had stopped the striker so that mid-night did not strike on New Year's Eve.

GANDERTON (Lower VB).

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## **Character Studies.**

When I first heard about Mr. Willard coming I was not very impressed. I thought that the programme would be most boring. In fact I was not looking forward to the performance in the afternoon at all. But as I went to ring the bell at 11-45 I heard shrieks of laughter coming from the gym. where a performance was being given to the junior forms. I then began to look forward to the afternoon a little.

When I settled down in the gym., after dinner, in front of Mr. Willard, I did not know what to expect. After giving an introductory speech, he proceeded to daub on his face what looked like a mass of fawn chalk. He then plastered on several other kinds of make-up, and with the aid of a wig, the man he was representing seemed to appear in real life. Not only did this figure stand in front like a statue in front of us, but actually began to speak in a "very 'umble sort of a way." This character was taken from "David Copperfield," by Charles Dickens.

Mr. Willard impersonated two more people and then gave the impersonation of a school master of the olden days. He dressed his face with whiskers, which made him appear as

though he had not shaved for weeks. He had one eye missing and the space was covered by a black eye shade. He, as Mr. Squeers, proceeded to take charge of a class, thrashing all of them on the faintest pretext. Any money that was sent to the boys went into his pockets ; if the parents had any complaint he thrashed them again. As a schoolmaster he knew no grammar or anything else except the use of the stick.

Mr. Willard then took one character from Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar," This character was Brutus for which he had no make-up, but only a black cloak. He recited one of the well-known speeches of Brutus. Another character he impersonated was Shylock from the "Merchant of Venice." The costume he wore was that of what I imagined to be a typical merchant, especially with his ginger beard.

After finishing this performance he promised us a return visit the first week in March. I think all persons present enjoyed the entertainment, and are looking forward to Mr. Willard's return.

HULL (Lower VB).

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### **Annoying Habits of Children.**

It is my pleasure (or misfortune) on Sunday to see that the younger children who come to the chapel which I attend are comparatively quiet. This may sound an easy task, but I assure you it is not. At the beginning of the Service I try desperately hard to remain unruffled, but usually my efforts are in vain, for, as they are rather young, if they behave well at the commencement of the Service, they soon become restless and look round for something with which to amuse themselves

One small boy has an annoying habit of concentrating his attention upon the antics of the choir boys, with the result that he usually becomes convulsed with laughter, during the prayers, much to the annoyance of the congregation. This same boy generally arrives with his pockets bulging with such things as bus tickets, broken wrist watches and occasionally a pen knife. Sometimes he empties his pockets and plays with these things when my back is turned, until he becomes a source of distraction to the congregation. It is then that I have to force him to put them away. From then until the end of the Service he sits quietly with a rather sullen expression on his face.

One thing most of the children delight in doing is to stand or sit on the heating apparatus; whichever they choose to do, they inevitably manage to get a foot wedged between the pipes and the wall, and only after several vigorous efforts can it be released.

One of the older boys has his own method of being irritating. Usually when silence reigns in the church he attracts my attention in a loud whisper which can be heard throughout the church and asks if he can give his smaller brother his collection. If I consent, the resulting conversation is audible to everyone present.

After such experiences I am more than delighted when several voices ask, "Sheila, may we go out for the sermon?"

SHEILA RYMELL (Upper VB).

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### **A Visit to Norwich Cathedral.**

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear and the bells rang out calling the people to worship. The sun shone through the stained-glass windows on to the huge nave, not used in war-time, with a centre aisle leading through a carved rood-screen to the high altar.

The main part of the cathedral was surrounded by little lady chapels to various influential members of the city and to the fallen of the last war. These contained tiny altars with one or two large candles in tall ornate brass candlesticks. The stone floors were nearly completely covered with names and epitaphs written to the dead of long ago, and round the walls were the same.

On the northern wall of the cathedral are cloisters which surround cool green lawns. Although some of the glass in the windows was broken by bomb splinters, the quiet atmosphere remains, shutting out the busy city beyond its precincts. Carved in the roofs of the cloisters were rude carvings of ancient myths and prehistoric animals. Into two niches at the end of these cloisters were fixed two statues of our present King and Queen in royal blue, purple and gold robes of office.

As the open air is reached again, we find that one of the cathedral buildings, once the home of quiet monks, is now the property of the American Red Cross and the stone courtyard is now trodden by "Yankee" soldiers instead of monk's sandals.

JUNE HIGGS (Upper VA).



### **A Concert Item**

Six nervous girls awaited their turn to do a country dance. "Up and back a double set and turn single—what next?" asked one girl. Her partner was about to tell her when the comic sketch finished, and the dancers crept on to the stage. The announcer poked his head through the curtain and said:—"Now we come from the ridiculous to the sublime. Six girls will show us a country dance 'Old Mole.'" The curtains jerked back, and the pianist started up on a lively tune.

All went well for a time. Then one girl skipped up to the middle without her partner. After that everything seemed to go wrong. One unfortunate Miss slipped half across the stage amidst roars of laughter from an audience composed of farmers, labourers and all the folk from the village and surrounding districts.

There were several other mistakes, including one made by the pianist who thought the dance had finished. Frantic whispers from the dancers made it clear that it had not.

In spite of the mistakes however, the girls were applauded loudly, with sundry stamping and whistling, and told that they looked very pretty!

SONIA SHORE (Upper IVA).

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### **Burst Pipes.**

We had just finished all the niceness of Christmas, when the weather became warmer. For several days our water pipes had been frozen, and we had to fetch water from a friend's house.

Before breakfast in the dim-out I went through the scullery in my slippers. Splash! Splosh! ugh! My feet! It did not take me long to jump back to the step, and get my Mother. She said in rather a fed up voice "Burst pipes! Come and have breakfast, when you have changed your shoes and socks."

After breakfast much mopping up was done.

Next I went to get the plumber, but he could not come for at least two days.

When he came and had a look at it he said he would need a new pipe. The next day he came with the pipe, but he had lost his blow-lamp. After about a week he came again with his blow-lamp, but no spirit for it. Since then he has really disappeared and the pipes are still not done.

I am longing for a real deep bath, as I am tired of washing in bits.

LAWRENCE HAINES (Form IIIB).

### **Oxford School Certificate Examination.**

In the examination held in December the following candidates gained certificates:—J. M. Horseman (5 credits), J. C. Irving (1 credit), A. Peel (5 credits), J. E. Vale (4 credits).

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### **National Savings.**

Savings have been brought regularly on Wednesdays to Form IIIB during the dinner interval.

To date (February 27th), the weekly average for this term amounts to £45. During the severe weather the weekly totals fell considerably. It is confidently expected that members—especially those who have missed several weeks—will make a special effort to raise our weekly average to £50—before the end of term.

We should like to see more members from the 3rd Forms. To begin saving early and regularly is a good habit and insures against the uncertain future.

A. M. WEATHERUP.

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### **Early Morning.**

At the bottom of our garden,  
Every early morn,  
A tiny ring of fairies  
Dance amid the corn.  
Their tiny squeaky voices  
Are shrill, sweet, and high;  
And when the dawn is breaking,  
They rise up to the sky.

EILEEN LAWRENCE (IIIa).

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### **Scouts.**

Once more, signalling has taken first place, and now that the hard groundwork has been mastered, the scouts are taking more interest in this work, and greater progress has been made.

We have taken advantage of the periodic spells of fine weather, to run one or two trails, and also some practices for the cross-country have been held, as this is essentially a race for scouts.

Since the last report, many letters of thanks have been received from old scouts, for the training, which they now find invaluable, and which they received while they were with the troop.

GRAY ii (Troop Leader).

### **Cadets.**

The platoon strength now stands at twenty-five. Corporal Ore, who has been a useful N.C.O. and has rendered much assistance, has now joined the Navy under the "Y" scheme. The usual course of training has been followed by the platoon, and twelve of the cadets are soon to take Part I of the certificate "A" examination. The officers would be glad to hear from old members of the platoon who are now in the Services.

LIEUTENANT F. W. HADWEN.

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### **Football.**

Captain—HILLMAN.

Our activities have been curtailed this term owing to the very severe weather. This caused the first three fixtures to be cancelled, but with the improved weather we hope to be able to play all our remaining matches. The first match we played was a hard-fought game, and after a hearty tussle we lost by a very narrow margin. The team has to be a little reorganised owing to the loss of a forward, but with this completed, I think we can look forward to a victorious end to the season.

Old scholars who were members of the School XI will be interested to know that the pitch has been moved a few yards nearer the boundary wall. A new canteen is being built, and already there seems to be quite a competition in order to find out which marksman can smash the first window. Mr. Ankorn kindly re-arranged the goal posts and re-marked the field.

Results :—

- A.G.S. v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (home), lost 3—4.
  - v. Redditch C.H.S. (away), drawn 0—0.
  - v. Evesham P.H.G.S. (away), lost 1—3.
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### **Hockey.**

There is very little to report about the Hockey teams this term. Owing to the bad weather at the beginning of the term, matches arranged with Evesham and Redditch had to be cancelled, but other fixtures have now been made.

Results :—

- A.G.S. 1st XI. v. Coughton Convent School (home), lost 1—2.

### My Wish.

My wish is to have a pony,  
One of my very own.  
If a boy, I would call him Tony.  
If a girl, I would call her Joan.

I would take my pony for long, long runs  
Over the green fields bright,  
And feel quite free and full of fun,  
All this is my greatest delight.

When my long ride ends at last,  
And I am tired but gay,  
I would groom my horse, heart beating fast,  
And feed it with water and hay.

My wish is to have a pony,  
One of my very own,  
If a boy I would call him Tony,  
If a girl I would call her Joan.

RACHEL KINNERSLEY (Lower IVb).

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### Our Fighting Boys.

Our Boys are fighting over there,  
In Burma, France and everywhere;  
To defend us near and far,  
From the bitter strain of war.

Fighting in the jungle drear,  
Thinking of their friends so dear;  
Fighting in the mud and snow,  
Nearing victory as they go.

Keep saving all that you can spare,  
To bring them back from over there,  
To the ones they love the best,  
And to get their well-earned rest.

DAPHNE BEESLEY (Upper IVa).

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### For The Juniors.

#### A School for Rabbits.

Every morning, warm or cool,  
Little rabbits go to school;  
On the way they often stop  
At the village candy shop.

Lettuce drops and carrots bars,  
Stocked up neatly in tall jars;  
There is some excuse you'll say,  
If they loiter on the way.

HAMPTON (Upper Remove).

**The Year.**

When we hear Spring,  
We rejoice and we sing.  
Each longer day  
We have fun and more play.

When Summer is heard,  
Back comes every bird.  
They build and they fly,  
And they sing in the rye.

Then comes Autumn warm,  
With sometimes a storm.  
Then many leaves fall,  
On the old garden wall.

Then Winter is cold,  
There are sheep in the fold.  
We skate and we slide,  
And on a sledge ride.

P. ASPINWALL (Upper Remove).

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Me and my brother at the age of four,  
Up till eleven could sleep and snore,  
Nice and cosy in a box of straw,  
In the hob-nailed boots that my father wore.

DAVIES (Lower Remove).

**Spring.**

Spring is in the air,  
I feel it everywhere.  
The crocuses are peeping,  
The little birds are cheeping,  
For the winter days are done.

The daffodils are blowing,  
(Thank goodness it's stopped snowing),  
The bluebells will be ringing,  
The swallows will come winging  
Back to us.

SECCOMBE (Lower Remove).

**Myself.**

When up to bed I go at night,  
I kiss all my dollies and tuck them up tight;  
I put on my nightie and turn down the bed,  
Then go fast asleep when my prayers I have said.

JOSEPHINE CARLYLE (Lower Remove).

ALCESTER:  
THE CHRONICLE OFFICE.  
HIGH STREET